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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 22 August 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you that over the past few days, Israel, the occupying Power, continued its campaign of military aggression against the Occupied Palestinian Territory, assaulting the Gaza Strip with more air strikes, causing further death and injury to Palestinian civilians, and launching a large-scale military raid and arrest operation in the West Bank.

The Israeli military attacks against the Gaza Strip over the weekend raised the death toll among Palestinian civilians, with 15 people killed and more than 40 wounded since this latest military aggression began on 18 August 2011. Tragically, among the five Palestinians killed by the Israeli occupying forces since our last letter to you, on Friday, 19 August, were a doctor, his brother and his son, leaving behind yet another deeply traumatized family in the Gaza Strip. Those five most recent victims of Israel's aggression included an infant child, Islam Mo'taz Bassem Quraiqe, 1 year old; his father, Mo'taz Bassem Quraiqe, aged 29; Dr. Munzer Bassem Quraiqe, aged 33; Emad Fareed Abu Aabda, aged 21; and Anwar Hassan Saleem, aged 22. Further, among the dozens of Palestinians wounded, many have endured grave injuries, sustaining charring and burning of their bodies and the loss of lower and upper limbs, as a result of the vicious weaponry and ammunition used by the occupying Power against them.

In addition, the occupying forces caused extensive damage to Palestinian properties throughout the Gaza Strip in those military attacks, with civilian infrastructure bearing the brunt of the attacks. Such widespread destruction recalls the deliberate targeting by Israel, the occupying Power, of Palestinian properties and institutions during its criminal and barbaric December 2008-January 2009 military aggression against Gaza, the so-called "Operation Cast Lead", by which the occupying forces caused massive damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, water, sewage and electricity networks, schools, hospitals, agricultural properties and businesses, further crippling the functioning of society and the economy in

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Gaza and causing vast trauma to the civilian population, particularly children and women.

In this latest series of attacks, the Israeli occupying forces have caused damage to a physiotherapy clinic, the only one of its kind in Gaza, which was run by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; four water pumps for the sewage system in Al-Nuseirat refugee camp; an electricity generator, also in Al-Nuseirat; the office of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which had been coordinating and delivering humanitarian aid to the civilian population; and several other properties housing Government institutions and civil society organizations. Needless to say, the destruction caused to the water, sewage and electrical infrastructure has further intensified the hardship being suffered by the Palestinian people in the besieged and blockaded Gaza Strip in the heat of this month of August, which also coincides with the holy month of Ramadan.

The Palestinian leadership condemns in the strongest terms these Israeli military attacks and the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians and destruction to properties and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. We call for action, including by the Security Council, to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for these crimes of aggression and brutality, including deliberate reprisals and collective punishment, against the Palestinian people and to bring to an immediate end this renewed cycle of violence. Moreover, we reiterate the need to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the entirety of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions and obligations enshrined in international humanitarian law and the direct commitment repeatedly made by the Security Council in this regard.

Today, I must also draw your attention to the simultaneous escalation of Israeli military operations throughout the West Bank, signalling a deliberate Israeli attempt to intensify tensions and confrontations on all fronts. Yesterday, 21 August, the Israeli occupying forces raided Al-Khalil (Hebron) and the surrounding area in the West Bank with a massive force, including over 100 military vehicles. The occupying army forcibly raided homes and arrested over 60 people in Al-Khalil and dozens of others in other areas, including a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Israeli military raids also caused injury to dozens of Palestinians and damage to Palestinian homes. We stress the need to address this crisis and to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all such acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, including with regard to its treatment of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, whose immediate release the Palestinian leadership continues to demand.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 401 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 19 August 2011 (A/ES-10/529-S/2011/528), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations